
TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR GRANT PROPOSAL



Submitting an Individual Artist Projects (IAP) grant proposal to the Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) means competing with individual artists throughout the state. During the FY2004 grant period 168 artists submitted applications and 80 projects were funded. It is in your best interest to approach the process thoughtfully and follow some basic grant writing strategies that will strengthen your application.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

1. **Check the eligibility requirements – are you eligible to apply?**
2. **What are the project limitations - does your project fit?**
3. **Read the guidelines.**

■ PLANNING

Think about your project. This can be an exciting part of the process, you are free to dream and explore – anything goes! Grant writing is one step in a larger process. Your application will be stronger if your project is well planned and designed. **Be sure you allow enough time to plan and design your project.**

Here are some questions to consider:

- What do you want to accomplish with this project?
- Why is this project important?
- How will your career benefit from this project?
- How will the public benefit from this project?
- How will you implement the project?
- What is the timetable for the project?
- What resources do you have that will make this project possible?
- What resources do you need?
- What is the budget for this project?
- How will you know if you have been successful?

■ WRITING

Opportunity vs. challenge

1. Allow yourself plenty of time to write, edit and assemble your grant application.
2. Follow the instructions. This includes submitting the correct number of copies, properly marking your artistic documentation, and attaching documentation in the requested order. Consult the checklist in the IAP application.

3. Concentrate on relaying the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of your project based on your advance planning. Be concise and specific.
4. Be positive – for instance, use *will* not *would*. Be enthusiastic; emphasize the future, not the past.
5. Be honest – lightly state the negative, turn it into a positive opportunity.
6. Assume that the reader knows nothing about you or your work. Remember that the information in your grant proposal is likely to be the first contact a panelist has with your work.
7. After each narrative statement, ask “so what?” Have you answered the question?
8. Have someone who does not know about your project read your proposal. (They can tell you if you have been clear in what you are trying to say.)
9. Proofread your proposal – including spelling, grammar and arithmetic.
10. Check and re-check your math! These details affect a panelist’s perception of how seriously you approach the project.
11. Submit high quality artistic documentation. Include only what is requested.
12. Don’t leave anything blank (unless you are told to).
13. Use easy to read type, no smaller than 11-point type.
14. Keep an extra copy of your application and proposal for your records.

- **Submit your application on time. All materials must be delivered to the IAC offices no later than 4:30 p.m. EST on February 2, 2004. Late proposals are not considered.**

All IAC panel meetings are open to the public. If possible, plan to attend the meeting during which your proposal is reviewed. Listen to the critiques of other proposals as well as your own. This is an opportunity to gain valuable insight about the panel process and to use panel comments to improve future proposals.

THREE BASIC STEPS (the condensed version)

1. Read the guidelines.
2. Follow the guidelines.
3. Meet the deadline.

“But first a word about shop safety -- be sure to read, understand, and follow the instructions provided with your power tools. And don't forget your safety glasses!” – Norm Abram, New Yankee Workshop

QUESTIONS? Contact the IAC:

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THE INDIANA ARTS COMMISSION is a public catalyst, partner, and investor in the arts, serving citizens of Indiana by funding, promoting, and expanding the arts. Funding for the IAC and its programs is provided by the State of Indiana and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.